

A Booklet on Ramadhaan

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In the name of Allaah the Most Merciful, the Ever Merciful

Introduction:

All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the worlds. May peace and blessings be upon His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, his family and all Companions. This is a short booklet addressing different *Ramadhaan*-related issues.

1- Definition of the fast:

Worshipping Allaah The Almighty by keeping way from the nullifiers of the fast from the break of dawn to sunset.

2- Importance of fasting in Ramadhaan:

Fasting the entire month of *Ramadhaan* is an important pillar of Islam, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Islam is based on five (pillars): Testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger; performing prayer; the payment of Zakaah (obligatory***

charity); performing Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House [of Allaah i.e., the Ka`bah]; and fasting the month of Ramadhaan." [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

3- Virtues of the month of Ramadhaan:

❖ ***Fasting and righteousness:*** Allaah The Almighty told us that fasting strengthens piety and the fear of Allaah The Exalted, and helps a person protect himself against evil desires. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): **{*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous*}** [Quran 2:183]

❖ ***The gate of those who observe fast (Ar-Rayyaan):*** *Sahl bin Sa'd*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"In Paradise, there is a gate which is called Ar-Rayyaan through which only those who observe fast (fasting) will enter on the Day of Resurrection. No one else will enter through it. It will be called out, "Where are those who used to observe fasting?'' So they will stand up and proceed towards it. When the last of them will have entered, the gate will be closed and then no one will enter through that gate.''*** [*Muslim*]

❖ ***Opening the gates of Paradise, closing the gates of Hell and chaining the devils:*** The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"When Ramadhaan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains."*** [*Al-Bukhaari*]

❖ ***Forgiveness of previous sins:*** *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said:

- ***"Whoever fasts Ramadhaan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."*** [*Al-Bukhaari*]
- ***"Whoever performs voluntary prayers at night during the month of Ramadhaan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."*** [*Al-Bukhaari*]
- ***"Whoever performs the night optional prayer during the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."*** [*Al-Bukhaari*]

❖ ***Fast is exclusively for Allaah The Almighty and He will reward it:*** *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said:

"Allaah the Exalted Said: `Every deed the son of Aadam does is for him, except the fast, which is (exclusively) for Me, and I will reward

him for it.' Fasting is a shield. When anyone of you is observing fast, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise his voice; and if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him, he should say: `I am fasting.' By Him in Whose Hand the soul of Muhammad is, the foul breath of one observing fast is sweeter to Allaah than the fragrance of musk. The one who fasts, experiences two joys: he feels joy when he breaks the fast and he is joyful by virtue of his fast when he meets his Lord.'' [*Al-Bukhaari*]

❖ ***From Ramadhaan to the next Ramadhaan:*** *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"The five (daily) prayers and the Friday (prayer) to the Friday (prayer) and Ramadhaan to Ramadhaan expiate whatever (minor sins) may be committed in the interval between them, so long as grave major sins are avoided."*** [*Muslim*]

4- Receiving glad tidings of the month of Ramadhaan:

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, used to give the glad tidings of the advent of *Ramadhaan* to his Companions. *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, *"The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, used to tell his Companions the good*

news of the onset of Ramadhaan, saying: ***"There has come to you Ramadhaan, a blessed month. Allaah has made it obligatory on you to fast (this month). During it, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the devils are chained up. In it there is a night that is better than a thousand months, and whoever is deprived of its goodness is deprived indeed."*** [*Ahmad* and *An-Nasaa'i*]

Mu'alla ibn Al-Fadhl, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said that the righteous predecessors used to call upon Allaah The Almighty for six months [to lengthen their lives] until they reached *Ramadhaan*, then they would call on Him the other six months to accept it [their acts of worship] from them. *Yahya ibn Abu Katheer*, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said, *"The supplication of the righteous predecessors used to be, 'O Allaah, keep me safe until Ramadhaan, and make Ramadhaan faultless for me, and secure it for me as an accepted (month of virtue).'"*

The righteous predecessors used to receive *Ramadhaan* by increasing the recitation of the Quran following the example of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, who used to review the Quran with *Jibreel*, may Allaah exalt his mention, during this month.

They used to find indescribable sweetness in their hearts during this blessed month, which strengthens one's faith and longing for meeting The Merciful.

Today, many people prepare for *Ramadhaan* by buying special varieties of food and drinks, indulging in immorality, watching TV serials, and participating in other social evils. On the contrary, we must prepare for this exceptional month by repenting sincerely to Allaah The Almighty and determining to take account of ourselves, and fight evil whims and desires.

How beautiful it would be to fast during the month of *Ramadhaan* as if this were the last chance for you to fast! The believer should realize that when he dies he will either rejoice at a good deed he has done or be filled with remorse over a good deed he has postponed.

Indeed, the Muslim is required to obey Allaah The Almighty at all times, but he should multiply his efforts in the seasons of virtue such as the month of *Ramadhaan*. There is no doubt that fasting as many days as possible during the month of *Sha'baan* is the best way to prepare for the advent of *Ramadhaan*.

It is common knowledge that the actual preparation for *Ramadhaan* starts with making a purified and good intention – and there is no time like the present. Thus, if we reach the month of *Ramadhaan* by the

bounty of Allaah The Almighty, we will convert our intentions into good deeds and acts of worship. However, if we die before the advent of the month, then our intentions would be better than our deeds, for the Muslim will be in a good state as long as he does good deeds and intends to do more good deeds.

We supplicate to Allaah The Almighty to guide us and to lengthen our lives until we reach this blessed month. We also ask Him to help us fast and perform the night prayer during it in the best manner possible.

A Selection of Ramadhaan Fataawa

***Question*:** What are the conditions of fasting?

***Answer*:** The conditions of fasting are divided into three categories:

First: The conditions of obligation

1- ***Adulthood***: The fast is not obligatory upon a child, even if he is an adolescent, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Three people are absolved of the religious assignments: the one who is asleep until he awakes; the child until he reaches puberty; the insane until he makes a recovery."*** [*Ahmad* and *Abu Daawood*] However, parents should train their discerning child to observe fasting if he can bear it; they even should punish him if he does not observe fasting at the age of ten, as is the case with prayer, to habituate him to the obligation of fasting.

2- ***Ability*:** Fasting is not obligatory upon whoever cannot fast due to illness or old age, as Allaah The Exalted Says (what means): ***{And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as***

substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day].} [Quran 2:184] The person who suffers from a chronic incurable illness and old people who are unable to fast are exempted from fasting, but they must feed a poor person as a ransom for each missed day of the fast. Such people are not obliged to make up for the missed fast days.

3- ***Residence*****:** Fasting is not obligatory upon the traveler, who is allowed to break his fast and then make up for it. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of days [are to be made up].}*** [Quran 2:184]

***Second**: The conditions of validity*

1- ***Intention*****:** The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Verily, deeds are judged and considered based on the intentions…"*** [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

The intention [to fast] must be made at night, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"There is no (valid) fast for the person who did not intend to fast from the night before."*** [*Abu Daawood* and *An-Nasaa'i*]

2- ***Reaching the age of discernment:*** Fasting is invalid for the child before the age of discernment, because he does not understand the rationale and meanings of the acts of worship.

3- ***Times when fasting is invalid****:* Fasting during the prohibited days like the two '*Eeds* is invalid.

Third: Conditions of both obligation and validity

These are the conditions without which the fast would be neither obligatory nor valid.

1- ***Islam:*** The acts of the disbeliever and the apostate are void and rejected, as Allaah The Exalted Says (what means): ***{If you should associate [anything] with Allaah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers}*** [Quran 398:65]

2- ***Sanity:*** The insane person is not competent to undertake religious obligations as proved by the aforementioned *Hadeeth* (narration): ***"Three people are absolved of the religious assignment … the insane until he makes recovery."***

3- ***Purity from menstruation and postpartum bleeding:*** The menstruating woman and the woman who has postpartum bleeding are not allowed to observe fast. 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, said, *"Menstruation used to come upon us in the lifetime of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and we were ordered to make up for the [missed] fast [days], but we were [never] ordered to make up for the [missed] prayers*."

***Question*:** How should one make up for the days of the fast in *Ramadhaan* that he has missed due to a reason approved by the *Sharee'ah* (Islamic legislation)?

A*nswer*: Whoever breaks his/her fast in *Ramadhaan* due to a *Sharee'ah*-approved excuse such as a curable disease, traveling, menstruation, postpartum bleeding, pregnancy, breastfeeding, then he/she should make up for the missed days of the fast of *Ramadhaan* after the end of the month and before the arrival of the next *Ramadhaan*.

However, if one does not make up for the missed days of the fast until the next *Ramadhaan* begins, then he must make up for the missed days of the fast in addition to offering expiation. The expiation is feeding a poor person for each delayed day of the fast.

In case of pregnancy and breastfeeding, breaking the fast is allowable under the condition of fear of harm. Hence, if the woman breaks her fast for fear that both she and her baby would suffer harm, or for fear that she alone would suffer harm, then she is required only to make up for the missed days without offering expiation. However, if the woman breaks her fast only for fear that her baby may suffer harm, then she is required to make up for the missed fast days in addition to offering expiation for every missed day.

***Question*:** What are the nullifiers of the fast?

***Answer*:** The nullifiers of the fast are:

1- ***Intentional eating and drinking:*** This only applies to the one who does so consciously, because if a person eats or drinks forgetfully or by mistake or is forced to do so, his fasting remains intact. This ruling applies whether the substance he eats or drinks during the time of fast is a nourishing material or not. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night].}*** [Quran 2:187]

As for the unintentional eating or drinking, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Allaah has excused for my Ummah (nation) what is done by mistake, out of forgetfulness and by coercion."*** [*Ibn Maajah*, *At-Tabaraani* and *Al-Haakim*]

2- ***Intentional vomiting***: *Abu Hurayrah* may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Whoever is overcome by vomiting is not to make up the day. Whoever vomits intentionally must make up the day."*** [*Ahmad*, *Abu Daawood*, *At-Tirmithi* and others]

3- ***Sexual intercourse*:** Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allaah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allaah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset}*** [Quran 2:187]

This verse proves that having sexual intercourse with one's wife during the daytime of *Ramadhaan* is prohibited. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* also commanded the man who had sexual intercourse with his wife during the daytime in *Ramadhaan* to offer expiation.

4- ***Masturbation*:** This means ejaculation through intentional stimulation of the genital organs by hand or in any way such as foreplay with one's wife. The scholars unanimously agree that masturbation nullifies the fast if it leads to ejaculation.

5- ***Menstruation and postpartum bleeding*:** It is unanimously agreed that they nullify the fast.

6- ***Intending to break the fast while fasting*:** Merely making a decisive intention - even if it lacks implementation - nullifies the fast, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Actions are judged and considered according to the intentions…"*** [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

***Question*:** Would the fast become nullified if anything enters the body?

***Answer*:** The rule that determines the materials that nullify the fast if they enter the body is that they should be classified as food or drink. The same ruling also applies to any nourishing material that reaches the stomach or nourishes the body. However, in principle, the fast is valid until any of its nullifiers occur. For example, suppositories do not nullify the fast, because they are not drink, food or nourishing material.

Likewise, insulin injections do not nullify the fast, because they are not intended for nourishment and the same is said about eye drops. With regard to injections that provide nourishment, they nullify the fast. Similarly, if one swallows or drinks anything that is not considered food or drink, his fast will be nullified because he does something similar to eating or drinking.

Allaah knows best.

***Question*:** Does bleeding nullify the fast?

***Answer*:** Bleeding or bloodletting does not invalidate the fast. *Ibn 'Abbaas* and *'Ikrimah*, may Allaah be pleased with them, said, *"The fast is only nullified by what enters [the body] rather than what is extracted from it."*

'Umm 'Alqamah, may Allaah have mercy upon her, said, *"We and nephews of 'Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, used to perform cupping in her house while we were fasting and she never forbade us."*

This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars; however, we would like to point out that it is better for the fasting person, who can delay blood extraction needed for blood donation or cupping and he fears that this may weaken him, to delay this till he breaks his fast (i.e. at night).

Az-Zuhri, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said, *"Ibn 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with them both, used to perform cupping while fasting during the month of Ramadhaan and other times, but he stopped doing that because of weakness."* [This tradition was narrated as *Mawsool* by *Abdurrazaaq* on the authority of *Ma*'*mar* from *Az-Zuhri*, from *Saalim* from his father. This was mentioned by *Al-Haafith in Al-Fat-h*.]

Allaah knows best.

Question**:** What are the acts of *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) that one is recommended to do during the month of *Ramadhaan*?

Answer**:** The acts of *Sunnah* that one is recommended to do during the month of *Ramadhaan* include the following:

- Delaying the *Suhoor* (pre-dawn) meal (as long as one does not fear emergence of the dawn) and breaking the fast immediately after sunset. the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* said: ***"Break the fast early (i.e. immediately at sunset) and delay the Suhoor."*** [*At-Tabaraani*]

- If anyone insults the fasting person, he should say to him, *"I am fasting."* The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"And if anyone slanders him or quarrels with him, he should say:" I am fasting, I am fasting."*** [*Muslim*]

- Breaking the fast with ripe dates or dry dates if he does not find the ripe dates; otherwise, one should break his fast with water. Anas, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, *"[…] used to break his fast with fresh dates before*

praying; if fresh dates were not available, he would eat (dried) dates; if dried dates were not available, he would have a few sips of water."

- Saying the following supplication when breaking the fast: ***"Allaahumma Laka Sumtu wa 'ala rizqiqa Aftartu, Thahaba Ath-Thama'u wab tallat Al-'Urooqu wa thabata Al-Ajru In Shaa' Allaah"***

"O Allaah, for You I have fasted and with Your provision I make my Iftaar (breakfast), Thirst has gone; veins have become wet and the reward (of the fast) has, Allaah-Willing, been established." [*Abu Daawood*, *Ad-Daaraqutni* and others]

- The *Taraaweeh* (voluntary night prayer in *Ramadhaan*) is also a great act of *Sunnah*. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Whoever performs voluntary prayers at night during the month of Ramadhaan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven."*** [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

Question: What is your advice to the youth during the month of *Ramadhaan*?

Answer: The best advice that we may give you, our young brothers, is to fear Allaah The Almighty, as this is the advice given to the earlier and succeeding generations. Allaah The Exalted Says (what means): ***{And We have instructed those who were given the Scripture before you and yourselves to fear Allaah.}*** [Quran 4:131]

Moreover, piety and fear of Allaah The Almighty is the hoped fruit of the fast, as Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous}*** [Quran 2:183]

Piety and fear of Allaah The Almighty also necessitate doing good deeds and keeping away from the forbiddances. So, the youth should be keen on performing as many acts of worship as possible during these blessed days.

They should be keen on all that draws them close to Allaah The Almighty including prayer, fast, night prayer, reading the Quran, giving charity and helping the needy.

They should also keep away from the acts and speech that cause the Anger of Allaah The Almighty, especially backbiting, talebearing, watching the prohibited pictures of women, films, and TV serials that

include prohibited intermixing between men and women and illegal exposure of women's adornment.

Generally, the fasting person should be aware that the fast is not limited to abstinence from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse; rather, the true fast means abstinence from the prohibitions, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"If one does not eschew false speech and false conduct, Allaah has no need that he should abstain from his food and his drink."*** [*Al-Bukhaari*]

Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, *"Whenever you fast, your ears, eyes, tongue should fast too. Avoid harming your neighbors and maintain staidness and dignity while you are fasting. Do not make the day of fasting and not fasting alike."*

Allaah knows best.

Question**:** What is the *Taraaweeh* prayer and what is its merit?

Answer**:** *Taraaweeh* prayer is the known voluntary prayer following '*Ishaa'* (night) prayer during the month of *Ramadhaan*. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, was the first one to perform it in congregation in the *Masjid*, but he did not continue performing it in this way for fear of it being made obligatory upon his *Ummah* (nation).

The righteous predecessors held different views regarding the number of its *Rak'ahs* (units), but the preponderant opinion is that it is eleven or thirteen *Rak'ahs*. '*Aa'ishah*, may Allaah be pleased with her, was asked about the prayer of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, during the month of *Ramadhaan*, and she answered, *"The Messenger of Allaah, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, did not observe more than eleven Rak`ah (of night voluntary prayer), be it in Ramadhaan or any other month."* [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

Ibn '*Abbaas*, may Allaah be pleased with them both, said, *"The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, used to perform thirteen Rak'ahs (meaning at night)."* [*Al-Bukhaari*]

The word *Taraaweeh* was extracted from the word *Tarweehah* (ie.e rest), because people used to lengthen the prayer very much, and then get some rest (*Tarweehah*) every four *Rak'ahs*.

The Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, urged us to perform night prayer during the month of *Ramadhaan* saying: ***“Whosoever performs voluntary prayers at night during the month of Ramadhaan out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven.”*** [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

He, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, also said: ***“Whoever prays [the night prayer] with the Imaam until he finishes, it will be counted as if he prayed the whole night.”*** [*At-Tirmithi*]

Hence, the Muslim should pay special attention to performing the *Taraaweeh* prayer.

Allaah knows best.

Question**:** Is performing *‘Itikaaf* (seclusion in the mosque with the intention of worship) and eating in the mosque for any number of days lawful or not?

Answer**:** Performing *‘Itikaaf* at the mosque is an act of worship, and one can perform *‘Itikaaf* whenever he wants and for the period of time he wants. The least period to be considered as a valid *‘Itikaaf* is the period that is conventionally considered to be a period of *‘Itikaaf* according to the custom of the people.

The best ‘*Itikaaf* is the one undertaken during the last ten days [and nights] of *Ramadhaan*. The Muslim should make use of the period of *‘Itikaaf* in reading the Quran, making *Thikr* (remembrance of Allaah The Almighty) and performing more voluntary prayers.

That is because *‘Itikaaf* means staying in the mosque for the purpose of worshipping Allaah The Almighty.

There is no harm if one eats inside the mosque whether in *I‘tikaaf* or otherwise, because the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, used to send food to the people of *As-Suffah*, the poorest Companions, who used to live in the mosque, as they were too poor to own a house.

Allaah knows best.

A Selection of Advice and Tips

***Question*: ** What is your advice to me regarding preparing a program in order to make the best use of the month of *Ramadhaan*?

***Answer*: ** We hope that your program includes the following points and takes the following tips into consideration:

1- Attending religious lectures of people of knowledge, because knowledge is the guiding factor that leads to righteous actions and just one knowledgeable person is stronger in the face of the devil than a thousand ignorant worshippers.

2- Performing the obligatory acts of worship on time, because Allaah The Almighty does not accept the voluntary acts of worship, if the obligatory ones are not observed.

3- Moderation in worship, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam,* said: ***"Do those deeds which you can do easily, as Allaah will not get tired (of giving rewards) until you get bored and tired (of performing religious deeds)."***

4- Performing some acts of worship secretly and keeping them as a secret between one and his Lord.

5- Uttering *Istighfaar* more often, especially at the culmination of good deeds to prevent ostentation.

6- Diversification in worship: For example, worshipping Allaah The Almighty during the night of *Al-Qadr* is not necessarily confined to prayer, rather, they are nights when good deeds in general are recommended.

7- Knowing the ranks and merits of various acts of worship and good deeds: For example, the best thing that our Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, and the other prophets, may Allaah exalt their mention, have ever said is: ***“Laa Ilaaha Illa Allaah (There is none truly worthy of worship but Allaah.)”***, and the dearest words to Allaah The Almighty are, ***“Subhaan-Allaahi wa bihamdihi, Subhaan-Allaahil-‘Atheem [Glory be to Allaah and His is the praise, (and) Allaah, the Greatest is free from imperfection)'.”***

8- Keeping away from sins and acts of disobedience, and guarding one's gaze, because refraining from committing sins is better than going through the rigours of repentance.

May Allaah The Almighty accept our fast and night prayer.

Allaah knows best.

***Question*:** What are the health benefits of fasting?

***Answer*:** Fasting is an act of worship and obedience to Allaah The Almighty. Hence, the Muslim should not fast with the intention of enjoying the health benefits of the fast, but with the intention of obeying Allaah The Almighty. However, Allaah The Wise decreed that all the acts of worship should have many psychological, social and health benefits.

Every day, modern studies unveil additional health benefits of the fast, because human knowledge is limited and can never be akin to the Wisdom of Allaah The Almighty regarding all that He imposed upon man to refine his soul and heart.

Making use of the health benefits of the fast requires adhering to the manners of fasting and refraining from exploiting the period between breakfast and *Suhoor* (pre-dawn meal) to overload one's stomach with food and drink so as not to disturb the body systems or suffer from indigestion.

Scientific research and studies about the human body and its physiological functions prove that fasting is a natural phenomenon that the body needs in order to perform the biological functions efficiently. These studies also show that fasting is very important for the body just like eating, breathing, movement, and sleep.

It is common knowledge that if a person is deprived of food and sleep for a long period, he will suffer and even become sick. Likewise, the body will be adversely affected if one does not fast.

The reason why fasting is important for the body is that it helps in the process of cell destruction through which the body gets rid of the old and redundant cells. The system of fasting in Islam implies around 14 hours of hunger and thirst at least, and then a period of eating lasting a few hours. This is the ideal system to activate the two processes of destruction (catabolism) and construction (anabolism), contrary to the common notion that fasting causes weakness. However, the fast must be performed at a reasonable rate as recommended in Islam. We fast for a month every year, and then it is an act of *Sunnah* to fast three days per month.

Among the health benefits the fast are:

- Helping in the treatment of many physical diseases including the digestive diseases such as acute gastritis, liver diseases, indigestion, overweight and high blood pressure.

- It is also very beneficial for people with diabetes, because it represents a good chance for the pancreas to get some rest. It is known that the pancreas produces insulin, which transforms the sugar into

starches and fats to be stored in tissues. If the food exceeds the amount of insulin, the pancreas becomes exhausted.

- Moderation in eating helps in weight loss for those who suffer from overweight. Fasting decreases the amount of body fats, which means that it also decreases the cholesterol, the material that causes arteriosclerosis and blood clots related to heart and brain arteries.

- Fasting also improves the health conditions of the mouth and teeth, allowing them to get some rest.

- It also gives a chance to the vagus nerve (digestive system) to get rest, which relieves the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.

- It has also been scientifically proven that fasting alleviates the pain of chronic arthritis.

However, these are only the benefits that have been discovered so far. Undoubtedly, there are numerous other unknown benefits that will be known in the future.

Question**:** What is the correct way to have the *Iftaar* meal (eaten after breaking the fast at sunset) in *Ramadhaan* when the stomach is empty? Could you please explain the correct way to us?

Answer**:** The stomach contracts and becomes smaller during the fast or when one eats small amounts of food.

Hence, it is recommended to break your fast with ripe (dry) dates, milk or a mixture of yoghurt (or water) with dry dates. This is because the body absorbs the sugar of the dates quickly and it uses them to generate energy quickly too.

Drinking soup is also beneficial. After this, you should go to perform the *Maghrib* prayer at the mosque, and then return to complete the *Iftaar* meal by eating moderately, because filling the stomach with food all at once harms the digestive system after the rest it has taken during the fast.

Question**:** What are the foods and drinks that one should have in the *Suhoor* meal to avoid excessive thirst while fasting during the day?

Answer**:** *Suhoor* is a blessed meal and the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, commanded us to have it saying: ***"Eat Suhoor; Indeed, there is a blessing in Suhoor."***

This means that having *Suhoor* alleviates the feeling of hunger and thirst, regardless of the quantity or type of food. Nevertheless, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, recommended having dates for *Suhoor*, saying: ***"The best Suhoor the believer can have is (to eat) dates."***

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"Eat your 'Suhoor' (the pre-dawn meal before the start of a fast) even if it is (mere) mouthfuls of water, for the blessings of Allaah are upon those who eat the Suhoor."***

Delaying *Suhoor* is an act of *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition), as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, used to do this. Nevertheless, there are some tips that should be considered in the *Suhoor* meal:

- It should be low in fats
- One should refrain from sleeping immediately after having *Suhoor*

- To avoid feeling thirsty, you should avoid very salty foods, spices, peppers

- It is better not to eat preservatives or fast food

- Drinking sufficient, but not excessive, amount of water

- Generally, having fresh foods (fruits and vegetables) as well as drinking juice, milk and salads – together with the previous tips would help making *Suhoor* beneficial and the fast blessed by the permission of Allaah The Almighty.

In conclusion:

We recommend that you have *Suhoor* as late as possible, and drink plenty of water and eat dates besides salads, milk, fresh foods, fruits, vegetables. You should also avoid fats, salts, spices, peppers and preservatives.

Question**:** I was a religiously negligent person, but Allaah The Almighty sent someone to save me from my state of heedlessness. However, I consider myself as being among those who are not guided during the month of *Ramadhaan*, and I feel ashamed and consider myself greatly negligent regarding many religious duties.

I want to know whether Allaah The Almighty will accept the fast of the rest of the days of *Ramadhaan* from me or not? Will I be among the successful ones on the night of *Al-Qadr*? Will Allaah The Almighty forgive my past sins and misdeeds?

Answer**:** We will say to you what a righteous scholar once said to the man who killed one hundred people and then came seeking repentance: *"Who can prevent you from seeking repentance?"*

Who can prevent you from returning and repenting to your Lord? Who can prevent you from cleaning yourself from the dust of sins and purifying your soul from the filth of disobedience?

No one can prevent you from disinfecting yourself from the germs of sins! No one can prevent you from returning as a clean and pure slave to your Merciful Lord, Who accepts His slave's repentance even if he has committed countless sins. Listen to Him as He invites you Saying (what means): ***{"O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the Mercy of Allaah.***

Indeed, Allaah Forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."} [Quran 39:53]

He is calling you by your best attribute ***"O My slaves"*** to give you the glad tiding that He forgives all major and minor sins whether few or countless.

So, repent to Allaah The Almighty, dear brother, and return to your Lord to escape from darkness to light and tranquility...

Do you not want to attain tranquility of the heart? Do you not want happiness of the soul and delight? Do you not want to live happily in this world and the Hereafter? You can achieve all this through repentance. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do}*** [Quran 16:97]

Rejoice, as there are glad tidings that exceed all of this: Your sins will not only be forgiven, but Allaah The Exalted will transform them into good deeds added to your record. What great Divine bounty and generosity! Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allaah***

will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allaah Forgiving and Merciful.} [Quran 25:70]

This should be your way…

As for your question about the acceptance of your fast and acts of worship, including the great night of *Al-Qadr*, we will ask you the same question again: Who can prevent you from this?

Allaah The Almighty is The Generous and The Forbearing. He never lets His slave down if he repents to Him no matter how many sins he may have committed.

You have to return in repentance to your Lord and again we give you the same recommendation that the righteous scholar gave to the man who killed one hundred people: Keep away from the bad companions and friends, and search for the good and righteous ones.

You are not required to leave your house, area or country; all that is required from you is to keep away from the bad companions and to replace them with good and righteous friends who observe prayers and know Allaah The Almighty.

Befriend the people whose faces are bright due to ablution, accompany whoever guides you to Allaah The Almighty and keep away from the liars, sinners, debauched and dishonest people.

This is the path you should take my brother…

You should thank Allaah The Almighty for opening your heart and guiding you to return to Him. Rejoice, as Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

- ***{And whoever fears Allaah - He will make for him a way out And will provide for him from where he does not expect.}*** [Quran 65:2,3]
- ***{And whoever fears Allaah - He will make for him of his matter ease}*** [Quran 65:4]

Rejoice, as the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said:

- ***"Whoever commits a sin and then repents is considered as if he never committed it"*** [*At-Tabaraani*]
- ***"All children of Aadam are sinners, and the best of all sinners are those who frequently repent."*** [*At-Tirmithi*]

We specially recommend you to observe the obligatory prayers as much as you can in the mosques, as Allaah The Almighty Says (what means):

- ***{And establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing.}*** [Quran 29:45]
- ***{And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember.}*** [Quran 11:114]
- ***{Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allaah, devoutly obedient.}*** [Quran 2:238]

We also advise you to supplicate to Allaah The Almighty often, as Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): ***{And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided}*** [Quran 2:186]

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, also said: ***"Nothing is more honorable in the sight of Allaah the Almighty than supplication."***

We ask Allaah The Almighty to guide you, open your heart, pardon you, forgive your sins, purify your heart and protect your chastity.

Supplications from the Sunnah

Here is a collection of supplications that were reported from the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and from our righteous predecessors to recite during the blessed month of *Ramadhaan*. *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"[There are] three persons whose supplication is never rejected (by Allaah): the just ruler, the fasting person until he breaks his fast and the one who is oppressed."*** [*Ahmad* and *At-Tirmithi*]

Hence, you should supplicate to Allaah The Almighty during this blessed month as much as you can, hoping that He answers your supplications that would lead to prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

The supplication to be said upon seeing the crescent moon of Ramadhaan:

“Allaahumma ahillahu `alayna bil-amni wal-eemaan, was-salamati wal-Islam, Rabbi wa Rabbuk-Allaah, Hilalu rushdin wa khairin (O Allaah let this moon appear on us with security and faith; with safety and Islam. (O moon!) Your Lord and mine is Allaah.” [*Ahmad* and *At-Tirmithi*]

The supplication to be said upon breaking the fast:

The time of breaking the fast is one of the times when the supplication is answered, '*Abdullaah ibn 'Amr*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: ***"A fasting person, upon breaking his fast, has a supplication that will not be rejected."*** [*Ibn Maajah*]

It is also an act of *Sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) for the fasting person to say, upon breaking his fast:

- ***"Allaahumma Laka Sumtu wa 'ala rizqiqa Aftartu, Thahaba Ath-Thama'u wab-tallat Al-'Urooqu wa thabata Al-Ajru In Shaa' Allaah"***

"O Allaah, for You I have fasted and with Your provision I make my Iftaar (break the fast), the thirst has gone; the veins have become wet and the reward (of the fast) has, Allaah-willing, been established." [*Abu Daawood*, *Ad-Daaraqutni* and others]

Supplication said when breaking the fast in someone's house:

Anas, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported that whenever the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*, broke his fast at someone's house he would say:

"Aftara 'indakum As-Saa'imoon wa Ghashiyatkum Ar-Rahmah wa Akal Ta'aamakum Al-Abraar wa Tanazzalat 'alaykum Al-Malaa'ikah"

"May the fasting (people) break their fast in your home, and may the Mercy (of Allaah) cover you and may the dutiful and pious eat your food, and may the angels descend upon you." [*Ahmad*]

The supplication of the Night of Al-Qadr:

‘*Aa’ishah*, may Allaah be pleased with her, asked the Prophet, *sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, saying, *"O Messenger of Allaah! If I knew the Night of Al-Qadr, what should I supplicate in it?" He replied:* ***"You should say: Allaahumma innaka `afuwwun, tuhibbul-`afwa, fa`fu `anni (O Allaah, You are Oft-Pardoning and Generous, and You like pardon; so pardon me).''*** [*At-Tirmithi* (*Hasan* and *Saheeh*)]

Meaning, O Allaah do not punish me because of my sins, cover my misdeeds, and protect me against your torment.

Some comprehensive supplications:

1- ***Allaahumma Inni A'oothu Bika min Al-'Ajzi wal Kasal wal Jubni wal Haram wal Bukhli wa A'oothu bika min 'athaab Al-Qabr wa min Fitnat Al-Mahya wal Mamaat"***

"O Allaah! I seek refuge in You from deficiency (to do good), indolence, cowardice, senility, and miserliness; and I seek Your protection against the torment of the grave and the trials of life and death." [*Muslim*]

2- ***"Allaahumma Inni A'oothu bika min Fitnat An-Naar wa 'Athaab An-Naar wa min Sharri Fitnat Al-Ghina wa min Sharri Fitnat Al-Faqr wa A'oothu bika min sharri Fitnat Ad-Dajjaal, Allaahumma Ighsil Khataayaya Bimaa'i Ath- Thalji wal Barad, wa Naqqi Qalbi min Al-Khataaya kama Naqqayata Ath-Thawba Al-Abyadha min Ad-Danas wa Baa'id bayni wa bayna Khataayaya kama Baa'adta bayna Al-Mashriqi wal Maghrib Allaahumma Inni A'oothu bika min Al-Kasal wal Haram wal Ma'tham wal Maghram."***

"O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from the affliction of the Fire and from the punishment of the Fire and from the affliction of the

grave and the torment of the grave and from the evil of the affliction of wealth; and I seek refuge with You from the evil of the affliction of poverty, and I seek refuge with You from the affliction of the anti Christ. O Allaah! Wash away my sins with the water of snow and hail, and cleanse my heart from all the sins as a white garment is cleansed from the filth, and let there be a long distance between me and my sins, as You have made the East and West far from each other. O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from laziness, senility, committing sins, and from being in debt" [*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*]

3- ***"Allaahumma inni A'oothu bika min Soo' Al-Qadhaa' wa min Darak Ash-Shaqaa' wa min Shamaatat AlA'daa' wa min Jahd Al-Balaa'"***

"I Seek refuge with Allaah against evil judgment, being attacked with misfortunes, of the gloating of the enemies and suffering affliction ." [*Muslim*]

4- ***"Allaahumma inni A'oothu bi ridhaaka min sakhatika wa bi Mu'aafaatika min 'qoobatik wa A'oothu bika minka la Uhsi Thanaa'an 'alayka anta kama athnayta 'ala Nafsik"***

"O Allaah! I seek protection in Your pleasure against Your wrath. I seek protection in Your pardon against Your chastisement; I seek

refuge with You from You, I am not capable of enumerating praise of You. You are as You have lauded yourself." [*Al-Bukhaari*]

5- ***"Allaahumma inni A'oothu bika min 'ilmin la yanfa' wa min qalbin la yakhsha' wa min du'aa'in la yusma', Allaahumma inni a'oothu bika min haa'ulaa' alarba'"***

"O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from knowledge that does not benefit, and from a heart that is not subdued and humble, and from a supplication that is not heard (i.e. not responded to), and from a self that is not satisfied." *Then, he would then say:* ***"O Allaah! I seek refuge with You from these four things."*** [*An-Nasaa'i* (*Al-Albaani*: *Saheeh*)]

6- ***" Allaahumma Rahmataka Arju fa la takilni ila nafsi tarfata 'aynin wa aslih li sha'ni kullahu la ilaaha illa ant"***

"The supplication of a distressed person is to say:"O Allaah! It is Your mercy that I hope for so do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for the blink of an eye and reform for me all of my affairs. None has the right to be worshipped except You." [*Abu Daawood*]

7- ***" Allaahumma rabbana Aatina fid-dunya hasanah wa fil-aakhirati hasanah wa qina 'athaab An-naar"***

"O our Lord! give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the punishment of the Fire." [*Al-Bukhaari*]

8- ***" Allaahumma inni as'aluka min Al-khayri kullih 'aajilihi wa aajilihi ma 'alimtu minhi wa ma lam a'lam, wa a'oothu bika min As-sharri kullih 'aajilihi wa aajilihi ma 'alimtu minhu wa ma lam a'lam, Allaahumma inni as'aluka min khayri ma sa'alaka 'abduka wa nabiyyuk wa a'oothu bika min sharri ma 'aatha bihi 'abduka wa nabiyyuk, Allaahumma inni as'aluka Al-Jannah wa ma qarraba ilayha min qawlin aw 'amal wa a'oothu bika min An-naari wa ma qarraba ilayha min qawlin aw 'amal, wa as'aluka an taj'ala kulla qadhaa'in qadhaytahu li khayra"***

"I ask You, Allaah, everything that is good, in this world and the Hereafter, whether we know it or not; and seek Your protection from everything that is bad, in this world and the Hereafter, whether we know it or not. I ask you the best of what Your Prophet Muhammed asked You, and we seek refuge in You from what he sought Your refuge from. O Allaah, I ask You for Paradise and every deed or speech that will be a means of drawing near to it; and I seek refuge in You from the Fire and from every deed or speech that will be a means of drawing near to it; and I ask You that You

make whatever You have decreed for me a means of good.” [*Ibn Maajah*]

9- ***“ Allaahumma bi‘ilmika Al-ghayb wa qudratika ‘ala Al-khalq Ahyini ma ‘alimta Al-hayaata khayran li wa tawaffani ma ‘alimta Al-wafaata khayran li, Allaahumma wa as’aluka khashyataka fi Al-ghaybi wa Ash-Shahaadah, wa as’aluka kalimat Al-haqqi fi Ar-ridha wal ghadhab, wa as’aluka Al-qasda fil ghina wal faqr, wa as’aluka na‘eeman la yanfad wa as’aluka qurrata ‘aynin la tanqati‘ wa as’aluka Ar-ridha ba‘d Al-qadhaa’ wa as’aluka bard Al-‘ayshi ba‘d Al-mawt, wa as’aluka laththat An-nathari ila wajhik wa Ash-Shawqa ila liqaa’ik fi ghayri dharraa’in mudhirrah wa la fitnatin mudhillah, Allaahumma zayyinna bi zeenati Al-eemaan waj-‘alna hudaatan muhtadeen”***

“O Allaah, by Your Knowledge of the Unseen and by Your power over creation, let me live if You know that life is good for me, and let me die if You know that death is good for me. O Allaah, I ask You to grant me fear of You in private and in public. I ask You for the word of truth in times of contentment and anger. I ask You for moderation in wealth and in poverty. I ask You for blessings never ceasing and the coolness of my eye (i.e. pleasure) that never ends. I ask You for pleasure after Your Judgment and I ask You for a life of coolness after death. I ask You for the delight of gazing upon Your

Face and the joy of meeting You without any harm and misleading trials befalling me. O Allaah, dress us with the beauty of faith, and make us guides who are upon (correct) guidance." [*An-Nasaa'i*]